

Objections to Act UT this far:

- Objections to Altruistic Hedonism:
 1. Swine Objection
 2. Nozick's Experience Machine.
- Objections to Act Consequentialism:
 1. Organ Donor Case (or, should we chop up Quentin?)
 2. Other stories.
- Objection to Principle of Utility:
 1. Utility Monster

The Practicality Objection and Rule Utilitarianism

- The Practicality Objection:
- Is it really practically possible to run through the utilitarian calculation of the Principle of Utility every time we make a moral decision?
 - It could be argued we often have too little time and too little knowledge of the long-term consequences of an act for the Principle of Utility to be of much help.

The Practicality Objection and Rule Utilitarianism

- Mill's Response to the Practicality objection:
- “The answer to the objection is that there has been ample time, namely, the whole past duration of the human species. During all that time mankind have been learning by experience the tendencies of actions; on which experience all the prudence, as well as all the morality of life, is dependent.”
- In particular, over the course of human moral history, we have developed *secondary moral principles* that we should live by.
- Can we think of some examples of such rules developed over the history of humankind?

Rule Utilitarianism

- Of course, these secondary principles may be mistaken, but:
 1. they can theoretically be corrected by applying the first principle-the principle of utility.
 2. that is no reason to discard the secondary principles and endeavor to test *each individual action directly* by the first principle.

Rule Utilitarianism

- **Act UT**: At any given time you should perform one of the actions then available to you just in case it will lead to at least as much aggregate happiness as would any other action available to you at that time.
- **Rule UT**: (1) Your actions should conform to a set of moral rules, and (2) You should act only on those rules the adoption of which would lead to the greatest aggregate happiness.

The Dilemma of Rule Utilitarianism

- Two interpretations of rule utilitarianism:

1. **Secondary Principles as Rules of Thumb.**

On interpretation 1, experience tends to show that certain rules, such as 'Do not kill', tend to promote happiness. Such rules ought to be followed *unless it is clear in a certain case that violating the rule would produce more happiness.*

2. **Secondary Principles as Inviolable Rules.**

The first principle yields (at least in theory) a set of secondary principles that one is obligated to obey in all circumstances. On interpretation 2, the secondary rules are (somehow) derived from the first principle, the principle of utility.

The Dilemma problem for Rule Utilitarianism

- The problem is in the form of a dilemma:
 1. If interpretation 1 (rules of thumb) is adopted, then it appears that Rule UT collapses into Act UT (with all its attendant problems). This version of Rule UT fails to add anything significant to Act UT and solves none of its problems, including the practicality problem.
 2. If interpretation 2 (inviolable rules) is adopted, then Rule UT ceases to be a consequentialist normative theory. But then it is not a utilitarian theory at all.

The Dilemma of Rule Utilitarianism

- An application of Rule UT: Recall the Chop-up-Quentin/ Organ Donor case.
- Rather than directly applying the principle of utility to the two actions and going through a utilitarian calculation, we act according to a set of rules.
 - On interpretation 1, there may be a rule, “Do not kill”, the following of which tends to maximize happiness. Chopping up the patient violates this rule.
 - However, if violating the rule would produce more happiness, then we ought to chop up the patient.

The Dilemma of Rule Utilitarianism

- On interpretation 2, the rules are inviolable: they are to be followed in all circumstances. So long as “Do not kill” is one of the secondary rules, we ought not chop up the patient.
- But in this case we are ignoring the consequences of the action entirely. So the theory we seem to be applying is not utilitarianism (which is committed to act consequentialism).